



Alton Climate Action & Network Emerging from Lockdown Update June 2020

Website: altonclimatenetwork.org.uk Email: altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com Facebook: [@AltonClimate](https://www.facebook.com/AltonClimate)

As we consider the changes to the lockdown rules and life starts to return to some semblance of normality it is clear we still have a very long way to go to tackle the so much bigger climate and environmental crisis. We cannot let this opportunity for urgent, large scale change pass by.

We do hope you will join us online on Thursday 2nd July at 7pm to discuss and plan for a greener, cleaner, healthier, fairer future - see the piece on ACAN's 2020 Vision below for more details.

News from some of our groups:

- Alton Community Cupboard
- Cycle Alton
- Alton Community Share
- The Permaculture group
- Alton and Villages Local Action for Nature (AVLAN)

ACAN's 2020 Vision Open Meeting

Eco hero competition

Alton Community Cupboard

has transformed due to Covid 19. They now deliver food to people who are in need/isolating/vulnerable rather than people coming to a venue to collect surplus food. With 25 wonderful volunteers delivering to 74 families over six days a week. They saw a steady increase in the number of families asking for help at first, but this has now levelled off with maybe one new family a week. And they are delighted that some families are now advising that they no longer need help.

They operate with teams of two (for social distancing) who collect the food, pack it into boxes

according to each household's dietary needs. Then a third volunteer delivers the boxes and comes back to help clean the room and ready it for the next day.



They have started making deliveries to Four Marks families every Saturday. Four Marks will eventually have their own Community Cupboard and ACC are very proud to have helped Haslemere set up their own project which opened on May 21st.

In addition to the local and Four Marks shops they now get a weekly donation from Fareshare warehouse, Morrison's and Asda all in Basingstoke and from Costco in Reading.

And there is a lovely lady who shops at Sainsbury every Saturday morning and brings in two bags full of wonderful stuff to add to the boxes, including chicken, beef, butter and milk.

With spring has come donations of fresh produce from Alton residents and the volunteers are also enjoying some lovely treats baked and donated by local people!

A big thank you to everyone for their support.

CYCLE ALTON is a newly-formed action group which has been established to campaign for better cycling infrastructure in the town and the surrounding villages.

Their aim is to act as a single representative group for all bicycle users in the town. The main focus is on short cycling trips such as those made by utility cyclists and commuters, to promote cycling as the natural choice for short journeys around the town, and between the villages and the town.

The group operates under the umbrella of Alton Climate Action & Network (ACAN) whose assistance in setting up the new group has been invaluable. Its remit falls within the scope of ACAN's aims and objectives, to promote a healthier, less-polluting and more environmentally-friendly way of living.

Cycle Alton has already liaised with all three tiers of local government and Cycle Hampshire, an umbrella body of similar cycle campaign groups around Hampshire. A number of meetings have been held via Zoom, and discussions are moving forward on a range of issues affecting local bicycle users such as the need for more bike stands, more space for cycling in the time of social distancing, and the promotion of Alton's cycle routes for tourism.

Cycle Alton is asking everyone who would like to see better conditions for local cycle riders to register as a supporter by emailing cyclealton@gmail.com to receive newsletters.

There is also a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Cycle-Alton-108176250895096/>



Alton Community Share *By the community for the community*

It's remarkable how often doing something to help the Climate Crisis crosses over into a benefit for the community and the individual – *Alton Community Share* is one such example.

ACAN were approached by Alton Town Council to set up a library of activities and equipment that could be borrowed free of charge for up to 3 weeks. On the 10th June the *Alton Community Share* was born. It is powered by donations and volunteers from the community. Specifically, we hope to help Altonians relieve some of the stresses brought about from the strictures imposed by Covid-19 whilst we are centred around the home and the usual facilities are not available. We provide such things as:

- Books, DVDs, CDs, craft materials and jigsaws for adults.
- Outside garden activities for families.
- Children's toys, crafts, books and games whilst school remains at a distance.
- Musical instruments and music scores for the artistic.

So what of the environment? Well, the more effective our use of things, the less production of new stuff, means less energy needlessly expended and less carbon dioxide for the world. This is a win-win for all concerned.



ACAN's Permaculture Group

In April Alton Climate Action & Network (ACAN) launched its first on-line discussion group. The chosen topic was Permaculture, a term derived from the words Permanent and Agriculture. This is sometimes referred to as "No-dig gardening" or "Forest gardening" although the term "Incredible Edible" pretty much sums it up too.

There have already been 3 well attended zoom discussions at which the group decided to not only try out permaculture principles at home - Sam and Eleanor have recently prepared a no-dig bed following Morag Gamble's YouTube video ["How to make a no-dig garden"](#), but also to set up a demonstration plot for local people to visit and learn from. So after the last meeting some members met to discuss a potential site for this and plan how to proceed.

At the last meeting Emma introduced her allotment neighbour, the wonderful Becky Searle who has a [website](#), [YouTube channel](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) all called **sow-much-more**. She also has boundless enthusiasm and experience which she is happy to share as the project takes shape.

The group is always delighted to welcome new members so if you are keen to get involved please email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com and they will make sure you receive a link for the next meeting.



ACAN's 2020 Vision to Build Back Better

In May we asked “What positives from lockdown you would like to keep in the post-Covid recovery?”

We received some very well considered and heartfelt responses, full of good ideas for life post Covid.

ACAN has now produced a report which analyses those responses and takes stock of local community action: what is already happening, plus shorter- and longer-term proposals.

[Please read ACAN's 2020 Vision report](#)

What we want now is for everyone to join us in taking this forward into positive actions that allow us to **Build Back Better**.

So that everyone can have their say we are hosting a:

Zoom Open meeting on Thursday 2nd July at 7pm.

To join us email altonclimatenetwork@gmail.com and we will make sure you get an invitation.

ACAN's 2020 Vision

Building back better

What should we keep from the lockdown experience



Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature (AVLAN)

Although some of AVLAN's projects have been on hold during lockdown, the grass has not grown under their feet. They continue to lobby Hampshire County Council about their management of our road verges and small green spaces. For more information take a look at Plantlife's web page on their [road verge campaign](#).

You may remember that AVLAN are keen to adopt a plot on Butts Road as a demonstration of what a good verge looks like. Gareth and Nancy have put together a very thorough and professional application for permission to take over responsibility for the plot. This has been submitted to East Hampshire District Council (known as a Memorandum of Understanding). It is likely to take longer to go through the appropriate channels but hopefully AVLAN will be ready to start work in the Autumn planting season.





In the meantime do follow the [AVLAN Facebook](#) page to find out all sorts of gems about the plants and wildlife in our gardens. Only yesterday we learnt that we should be welcoming the Leopard slug – unlike other slugs they don't tend to damage healthy, living plants but they do eat other slugs. In fact in they can pursue their prey at a staggering 6 inches per minute! Who knew???

Emma's Eco-hero competition is still open. Children aged between 4 and 11 years old can still submit their [Eco-Hero](#) designs. For more information about Emma's work on this see our website: <https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/2020/04/08/design-an-eco-hero-competition/>

We are very much looking forward to seeing all the entries.



DESIGN AN ECO-HERO COMPETITION



Calling all Eco-Heroes – your planet needs you!

Children between the ages of 4 and 11 (YR-Y6) are invited to design their own Eco-Hero who can help to save the planet.

HOW TO ENTER

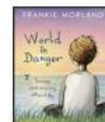
1. Get creative and design an Eco-Hero on a piece of A4 paper: The 'Eco-Hero' can be represented either as an original drawing, painting or even as a photograph, either of you dressed up as an Eco-Hero or a 3D object you have made of your hero (e.g. a Lego model or junk model)
2. Clearly label any special clothes, tools and powers. E.g. water bottle, litter picker
3. Write your name, school and class (YR-Y6) on the back.
4. Either return it to your school if your school had a special assembly or email it to: ecohero2020@gmail.com

PRIZES

Two categories: Foundation Stage/ KS1 and KS2

First Prizes: a selection of books about the environment, including signed copies of local Eco-Hero Frankie Morland's book – 'World in Danger'

Runners-Up: Signed copies of Frankie Morland's book 'World in Danger'



CLOSING DATE

When schools reopen after COVID-19.
